

# The process of reflection

(Practical guide-lines)

How to support learners in recording and structuring reflection?

## Useful strategies to support student review and reflection:

- Review the reflective statements written for each artifact as it was stored, elaborating on its meaning and value and why the student selected it for their presentation portfolio.
- Work through the assessment objective/outcomes for the chosen assignment.
- Encourage the learner to talk about what they have done/produced
- Look carefully, and show interest in, evidence in the learners ePortfolio
- Encourage students to evaluate how they have worked/done something Encourage students to evaluate their progress measured against their Action Plan
- Summarise what the Learner has told you and remind them that they need to record written/audio their thoughts
- Select the artifacts that represent achievement of the standards or goals.
- Provide the learner with feedback on what the learner has done/created and what they could do to improve.

## 1. Student self-reflection

### ☐ **Reflection exercise 1**

---

Ask students to create their portfolio by:

1. Arranging all their works of writing from most to least effective, including all evidence of the writing process behind each final draft.
2. Reflecting on their two best works, answering the following questions.
  - What makes this their best (second best) work?
  - How did they go about writing it?
  - What problems did they encounter?
    - How did they solve them?
    - What career and personal goals did they set for themselves?
    - How did they go about accomplishing them?

Placing this evaluation of their process and product in front of each final draft when completed.

3. Answering these two questions:
  - What makes their most effective work different from their least effective work?
  - What are their goals for future career development?

Learners' self-evaluation of their two best works will be as important to their grade as the teacher's assessment. The teacher should also consider the number of works in the portfolio, the range of styles, and the progress of the student.

## ❑ **Reflection exercise 2**

---

Preparing students for learning often begins with a process of reflection.

Ask students to reflect on a few questions:

- Why Am I Studying?
- What Grades Do I Want and Why?
- How Much Effort Do I Need to Put In?
- Am I Willing to Make the Effort?
- What Skills Do I Already Have?
- Am I Ready to Take Charge of my Learning?

You might choose to skim the surface while reflecting on these questions. Or you may want to go a little deeper – asking yourself “why?” each time you come up with an answer to every question. The deeper you go, the clearer your goals will become. Write them down and reflect on them periodically throughout your time at University. You may be surprised at the extent to which your goals change, evolve over time or remain unchanged. It's all good – just tells you something about your own personal approach to getting where you want to be.

Successful learners use a variety of strategies in the process of learning. Researchers in the fields of education and psychology often refer to these strategies as metacognitive and cognitive. Metacognitive strategies relate to planning and personal reflection – if you took some time to reflect on the previous questions, you were using metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies relate to how you process information and make it meaningful.

### • **Why Am I Studying?**

Sometimes people make the choice to attend University because it seems like the right thing to do or because parents or friends have provided "encouragement". Maybe you are studying to attain a career goal. Ask yourself the question and keep asking "why?" until you come up with your own reasons for pursuing higher education.

The reason for this is clear. You are more likely to put in the required effort to attain your goal if it is important to you. And, although University can be a fun and rewarding, academic success does require effort.

To help you think through your reasons for studying, here are some suggested resources:

A trusted friend or family member

### • **What Grades do I Want and Why?**

Having a target to aim for is helpful for motivation. However, again, it is important to keep your true goal front and centre. Again, ask yourself: Why do I want those grades? Will those grades help me to achieve my goals? How?

Once you have an answer to this question, consider whether or not you are willing to put in the extra effort required to achieve the grades you want.

- **Related questions are "how much effort will this take?" and "am I willing to put in the required effort?"**

Remember, grades are not a measure of your worth – they are the easiest way for institutions to assess performance in order to make decisions about academic advancement.

- **How Much Effort Do I Need to Put In?**

You likely have a sense of how much effort you will need to put in based on your educational experiences up to now. However, keep in mind that University may be an entirely new and overwhelming experience for you. Particularly if you are adjusting to living away from home, in a new country, raising a family or caring for parents, experiencing personal challenges, or are experiencing new found freedom away from your families. All of these challenges compete for your energy.

You may need to balance your expectations for grades against other demands that you are experiencing – particularly as you adjust to University life.

There are a number of resources to assist you:

- **Am I Willing to Make the Effort?**

This will be an easy question to answer if you are clear about your goals and if you are confident you understand how much effort will be required.

Talking with your instructors and other students will help you gauge how much time you will need to spend studying in a particular course to achieve your goals.

Just the fact that you have found this website will (we hope) help you to access the many resources UBC offers to students in support of your learning.

You may want to be aware of resources including Study Groups, Tutoring and other student success programs - which you can access via the Quick Links or on this site. They may help smooth your way as you move ahead.

- **Do I Want Take My Time or Cram?**

If you thrive on the excitement and pressure of working on the final paper all night before the due date, there are resources to assist you. On the other hand, if you prefer a planned approach with a somewhat more relaxed pace, doing a little bit every day, there are resources that you will find helpful as well.

For the crammer:

For the planner:

- **What Skills Do I Already Have?**

You likely have many excellent skills and approaches that have helped you excel as a student. You may want to take a moment to think about those qualities, skills and personal attributes that have previously assisted you in learning new things and in new ways. Many of these approaches to learning will be valuable to you now.

On the other hand, you may find that some of the strategies you previously used don't work so well now. At the first sign of trouble (a low grade on a paper or negative feedback from an instructor) don't panic – just ask questions. Try to learn where you went wrong and seek out resources to help you improve or develop the skills you need in order to succeed.

In addition to the resources offered in the Quick Links menu, try:

- **Am I Ready to Take Charge of my Learning?**

Ultimately, what you learn and how you learn it is your responsibility. Here are a few simple tips to remember when the going gets tough:

If you don't understand something, meet or talk with the instructor, TA and fellow students until you feel on firmer ground.

If you're falling behind, discuss this with your instructor. He or she may be able to suggest an approach that will help you meet the demands of the course.

Check out options for tutoring and study groups.

Invest some time in gathering your resources (software to help you with mind mapping, library tutorials, using the Library's online database for research, developing a system for managing your notes, links to internet resources, etc.).

## ❑ **Reflection exercises 3**

---

### **How to stimulate learners to reflect on their own personal development?**

Give students the following assignment:

- **Explore New Interests**

Open yourself up to a new experience or explore aspects of a different culture this week. Go to a museum, take in a concert, go to a different house of worship, or try a new ethnic restaurant. Travel off the beaten path and try something new. Test your comfort zone.

Reflect on what you did this day. Did you enjoy it?

- **What are your Ambitions?**

*"Keep away from those who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you believe that you too can become great." -Mark Twain*

Ambition is the force driving us to reach our dreams, yet sometimes others can affect our ambition by questioning our choices or dreams we seek to achieve. Sometimes we can affect our own ambitions by talking ourselves out of our dreams and by thinking that we're not smart enough, talented enough or giving enough.

Think of someone great or small who achieved a goal or dream because of his or her ambition, and despite setbacks or criticism, remained focused on achieving that dream. If you could sit down with this person for a cup of coffee, what questions would you ask them? What advice would you seek?

- **Setting Short-Term Goals**

Create a list of ten goals you might have for the upcoming semester. They can be academic or personal goals. Narrow the list down to three goals. Beneath each goal, write four or five steps and requirements that you will need to achieve these goals.

Keep this list with you throughout the semester. Make sure you refer back to it to see if you are on the path of achieving these three goals.

To be nobody but yourself--in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else--means to fight the hardest battle any human being can fight, and never stop fighting. - E.E. Cummings

Describe yourself. Now describe yourself as you think others see you. How do the two descriptions compare?

- **Where Will You Be?**

Write a fictional account of what your life will be 6 months after you have graduated. What 3 principles or influential ideas have you learned here at college? How do you think you will apply these ideas to your life once you have graduated?

- **Affirming Talents**

- What are your gifts and talents? What makes you, you? Make a long list of those attributes.
- Ask a close friend or mentor to make a list of what they think your gifts and talents are and what makes you unique. (Don't show them your list)
- Compare the two lists and write about how those two lists are similar and how they differ
- Were there qualities on the list that your friend or mentor created that surprised you?

- **Journey To Achieving Goals**

Have you ever found yourself creating a goal and building a dream about how it would be when you got "there"?

So many times we have an image of how it would be when we accomplished something and then have been disappointed when we actually got "there." The experience didn't measure up to the dream. All that happens is that we then establish another "there" to go toward. It can be a frustrating cycle.

We must remember that it isn't "there" that is important. It's not the destination but the journey that is important. What we need to be aware of and tend to is the journey towards that goal and what we learn about ourselves along that way. Everything happens as you are getting "there."

- Think back to a time when you set a goal for yourself
- Relive that experience through writing and ask yourself "What did I learn along the way?"
- How has that experience helped to shape who you are today?

- **Freewrite**

- A springboard is a real effective way of getting us to spring off into those journaling waters.
- Write in your journal an essay on the topic: "If I could change one thing about myself..."
- Complete the phrase and write non-stop for 5 minutes.
- Read what you wrote in your journal. Were you surprised by what you wrote?

## **❏ Reflection exercise 4**

---

### **Reflection on learning and achievements**

Use this checklist to help students reflect after they have completed an assignment, a piece of coursework or an activity.

Quality of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are you proud of what you have done or produced?</li><li>○ How could it be improved?</li><li>○ What grade or level has it been assessed at? Is it better than your star potential?</li><li>○ What could/ should you have done to make it better?</li></ul>
Planning the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Did you plan the activity?</li><li>○ Did you stick to your plan?</li><li>○ Did anything happen that made you change your Plan?</li><li>○ Did your plan include completion dates/deadlines?</li><li>○ Did you meet or beat your completion dates/deadlines?</li><li>○ Did you use:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A MindMap?</li><li>○ A time line?</li><li>○ A Gantt Chart?</li></ul></li><li>○ An Action Plan?</li><li>○ Next time you start a project/activity how will you plan it?</li><li>○ Did anyone help you to put your Plan together?</li><li>○ Did you ask anyone to review your plan as you worked through the Project?</li><li>○ Did you produce any design sketches or notes? Did they help you?</li></ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Did you Identify resources, tools, equipment that you needed?</li><li>○ Did you Identify people who could help you?</li><li>○ Did you make good use of tools and resources including ICT?</li><li>○ Did you use tools and resources safely and efficiently?</li></ul>
Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Did you ask other people for help or support?</li><li>○ Did you work with other people to solve the problem/complete the task?</li><li>○ Did anyone ask for your help?</li><li>○ Did the group work well together?</li></ul>
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Did you solve the problem that you were given?</li><li>○ How successful was your solution?</li><li>○ How did you know that your solution was successful</li><li>○ How would you tackle a similar problem in the future?</li><li>○ What role did you take in the team/group? Did you lead?</li><li>○ How did you feel about working with other people?</li><li>○ Did you have to convince other people that your ideas were 'right'?</li><li>○ Were you able to listen to other members of the group?</li><li>○ Did other people convince you that their idea was 'right'?</li></ul>

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did you have to find information?</li> <li>○ Did you find what you wanted?</li> <li>○ Did you find it efficiently?</li> <li>○ Did you have to use a questionnaire to collect the information that you needed?</li> <li>○ Did you have to set up an experiment</li> </ul>
Learning	Do you learn best by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Listening</li> <li>○ Watching</li> <li>○ Practical tasks</li> </ul>
Action Plan	What do you need to do to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improve the quality of the product or outcome</li> <li>○ Make sure that you meet or beat your star potential</li> <li>○ Work more effectively within a team</li> <li>○ Solve problems more efficiently</li> </ul>

## ☐ **Reflection exercise 5**

---

### Reflection with peers

When students work in small groups they are given the opportunity to communicate with their peers about their ePortfolios. Small groups provide a forum in which students can ask questions, discuss ideas, make mistakes, learn to listen to others' ideas, and offer constructive criticism. A small group environment where students feel secure asking questions and responding to their peers' ideas may, in turn, support similar communication patterns in whole group situations.

Use the following form to facilitate reflection with peers.

#### PEER REFLECTION / SHARING INPUT FORM

Student providing the input	
The writer is	
The assignment / title is	
Today's date is	
Something I liked was	
Because	
Something I did not understand was	
Because	

A question I would like to ask is	
Something I would like to know more about is	
I would like to make these general comments regarding the piece's strengths and weaknesses	
If I were giving this piece a grade, I would give it a(n)	
Because	

## 2. Teacher self-reflection

Exercises in reflection can also help teachers to assess the impact of their teaching and can prime students to write more substantive evaluations about how the course promoted their learning and growth.

Below you will find some assignments and exercises that ask students to reflect on their learning. Most of these suggestions can work with a variety of formats: having students write, discuss in pairs, discuss in small groups, or discuss with the entire class or precept.

- Ask your students how their thinking about a course topic has deepened or changed this semester.
- Distribute the outline of your syllabus, including only weekly topics and readings. Have students annotate the syllabus, noting the knowledge or concepts that they most remember for each week.
- Ask your students to describe an impact of the class that you and the rest of the class are unlikely to know about. Did any of the course concepts influence a conversation outside of class? Were any ideas or skills learned in class applied in another academic context? Or in a non-academic context?
- Give your students an opportunity to reflect on how coursework prepared them for their final scholarly project for the semester. Why? How?
- Give students up to ten minutes to write down the three most important ideas or concepts learned or skills developed. Let a few volunteers share their lists or give everyone a chance to pick one of their three items and explain it to the class.
- Give students an opportunity to articulate how newly acquired skills or knowledge might help them in future classes, professional, civic or personal life. You might simply ask "How might your learning from this class prove relevant for the future?" A more substantive assignment would ask them to take some course learning and apply it to a new context.
- Next semester, you might begin with an exercise that can be used for reflection at term's end. On the first day, have students write down what they expect or hope to learn. Collect their responses so that you can return them in one of the final classes. Ask students to reflect on whether the class fulfilled their hopes or whether they learned something they value, but did not anticipate.

### 3. Reflection aspect of Career ePortfolio

#### ❑ *Reflection exercise 1*

---

When you ask learners to create their portfolio you should choose an appropriate structure. Information should be submitted and organized at various levels. Here is an example of an effective structure of a **Career ePortfolio**:

- **CV section:** The CV section will take users step-by-step through the process of creating one or more CVs.
- **Who Am I?:** This section will help users to learn more about themselves, to explore their interests, skills, personal qualities and your attitudes to work and learning.
- **My Progress:** Learners are encouraged to record their skills, achievements, qualifications and experience of work in their portfolio in order to present/submit their progress. The ePortfolio will help them to identify what they are good at.
- **Progress chart:** The ePortfolio users continuously review and revisit their self assessments, achievements and plans to make sure that these keep pace with their experience of education, life and work.
  - Progress Chart lets users see at a quick glance how often they have used different sections of their e-Progress File.
  - Keep the ePortfolio up to date. It's here to help users manage their self development.
- **Reflection:** Users will be encouraged to reflect and take action, to make decisions, work through the issues and record the results. The ePortfolio can help users to identify the things about themselves they would like to improve, make plans, set targets and monitor your achievements.
  - Completing 'Who am I?' may highlight things about users that they wish to improve or develop.
  - Action Planning can help to set targets and work towards them, to identify what they need to do to achieve these targets.
  - Action Planning can help to assess how they are doing against any targets they set themselves.
  - There should be a section "Support Team" which will help learners identify who can help them with developing and achieving their plans.
- **My Presentation Files:** Here users can sort, sift and select the documents they need to take with them on different occasions e.g. job interview, careers interview, meeting with a tutor, job appraisal. They can create and store CVs, applications letters and personal statements in their e-Portfolio.

#### ❑ *Reflection exercise 2*

---

Reflection process is a part of the job analysis process where students are asked to deconstruct their jobs, both current and past, to identify the various major and minor components.

Ask students to identify what aspects of each job they like most and dislike most, with the instructor guiding them to identifying and defining the root aspect of what appealed to them. This discussion generally leads to an awareness of specific aspects of either procedure or, often, of personal interaction, which results in favorable or unfavorable reaction.

The focus on past positions, even if they are not in the field, help the student understand how to deconstruct a job or profession in order to understand the different components.

Students often discover that the aspect of a job that attracted them is, in fact, only a minor part of what is expected and that the majority of the position consists of things they do not like doing. In these instances, the student is guided not only in making the best of the situation, but also in identifying alternative career options.

With this exercise, students begin the process of analyzing the situations they encounter in the work environment.

Ask students to share their experiences in small groups. Not all of the reports are positive. However, students are led, through a series of questions, to identifying what happened and why.

Recognizing what you are doing, how it impacts job performance and workplace operation, and adapting behavior in order to maximize both, not only makes doing a job better, but often leads to career building opportunities. The importance of thinking things through and seriously deconstructing careers as well as job positions is emphasized as a key component of career development.

In order to cement this information, students are required to construct a **career map** with three different alternative goals and a minimum of five alternative career paths to reach those goals in 10 – 15 years. They first identify the three alternative goal positions and analyze what is required in them.

This analysis incorporates researching job descriptions and competencies and information interviews of individuals in these positions. (This second activity is generally an optional assignment. However, it has proven to be extremely helpful for students who are doing serious career planning.) This job analysis assists them in identifying the degree to which their job likes and dislikes correspond to their career goals.

Students are then required to reflect on the degree of compatibility to ascertain whether they really believe their behaviors will be conducive to career enhancement and development if they aspire to the position identified. Students often narrow their preferred career path or redirect their plans on the basis of reflection concerning career responsibilities. Thus, they are offered yet another example of how reflection in practice can be applied to career development. Looking critically at career options and reflecting upon their preferred practice and activities leads to changes in practice, either in adapting behavior toward that which is appropriate for their goals, or in changing their goals.

In creating the alternative career maps, students reflect on alternative jobs and career paths that can provide career enhancement opportunities as well as ones that might make the path more difficult. On the basis of the analysis of the goal position, the students identify jobs that amplify the primary characteristics required so that they can better select intermediary positions that enable them to refine and perfect performance behaviors and skills required in their goal position. In doing this exercise, students also have to identify what aspects of their current position lead to the development of the required capabilities identified in the analysis of their career goal position.

This provides an example of the ongoing reflection in practice that they need to use as they build their careers. The need for ongoing analysis and reflection is stressed in order to continue positive career development.

## Workshop on reflection

In this workshop we will consider the concepts of reflection and reflective practice.

- Please write your definition of reflection in the context of ePortfolio development:

***/Reflection** : a multi-sourced, honest and systematic analysis of an educational event/*

- When you ask learners to create their portfolio you should choose an appropriate structure. Information should be submitted and organized at various levels. Try to design an effective structure of a **Career ePortfolio**: /reflection exercise 1/

- Part of the reflection process involves **setting targets**. What would you say are the important features of good target setting ?

*SMART targets*



Specific



Manageable



Assessable



Realistic



Time-specific

## Reflection cycle



Fill in the reflection cycle. Connect the following information with the appropriate stage of reflection process:

- This phase provides information on what evidence/ artifacts the practitioner has included.  
Answer: Select
- This step involves a description of the circumstances, situation or issues related to the evidence or artifact. The four "W" questions are usually addressed:  
*Who* was involved?  
*What* were the circumstances, concerns or issues?  
*When*?  
*Where*?  
Answer: Describe
- This step involves "digging deeper." The "Why" of the evidence or artifact and the "How" of its relationship to your teaching practice should be addressed.  
Answer: Analyze
- In the previous three steps, you have described and analyzed an experience, a piece of evidence, or an activity. The actual self-assessment occurs at this stage as you interpret the activity or evidence and evaluate its appropriateness and impact.  
Answer: Appraise

- This step holds the greatest opportunity for growth as you use the insights gained from reflection in improving and transforming your practice.

Answer: Transform

**Give your opinions and discuss:**

- How would you foster peer communication and learning?
- What would you, as a teacher, do to encourage your students to reflect with and from their peers?
- How might your students learn from each other in a small group?
- What are the characteristics of a learning environment that would support interaction between students?